

Good Afternoon,

My name is Taylor Endress, and I reside in Manchester, CT. On March 12, 2019, I am presenting on House Bill 7292 an act concerning social worker title protection to the Labor and Public Employees Committee. I am a naval veteran and a BSW student at UCONN School of Social Work, and am here to testify on behalf of my cohort.

We strongly believe that title protection is important to our profession. As BSW students, we are currently engaged in rigorous academic training, which consists of cultural competency, ethical practice, human behavior and therapeutic treatments, and we engage in over 400 hours of volunteer and field work. Individuals that have not gone through such academic training, and not earned a degree in "social work," reflects negatively on the entire social work profession. Social workers with degrees are bound by the NASW Code of Ethics. These public standards are our ethical roadmap to which we are held accountable. Hence, consumers who are provided inadequate services and/or harmed by "social workers," in name only, do not have adequate reporting mechanisms to file complaints. Therefore, creating more harm to our consumers, the people we fight so hard to advocate for and protect.

Although we support title protection for social workers, we strongly believe the language of the bill must be changed to allow social workers, who have earned a degree but do not have a license, to continue to call themselves social workers. As BSW students, we are unable to obtain a license in social work in the state of Connecticut. Some of us will work in the field for a few years prior to obtaining an MSW and, if and when we obtain an MSW, some of us may be interested in macro-level work, which does not require a license to practice. The deepest roots of the social work profession stem from macro-level social workers who were engaged in social and political action aimed at addressing social injustice. I myself am one of the BSW students who is interested in policy and large-scale advocacy, therefore I do not need a license to practice. I can't imagine after all the hard work between school and internships not being called a social worker. To some it may just be a title but to me it holds significant weight, I am proud of my professions history and plan to carry on the its legacy. Macro-level social work involves interventions and advocacy on a large scale, which affects entire communities, states or even countries. It helps clients by intervening in large systems that may seem beyond the reach of a single individual. Finally, banning social workers, who don't have a license but have a degree in social work, from calling themselves social workers is not only disrespectful and a devaluation of are educational degree but, can potentially impact our ability to obtain a job in the field of social work, a field that we are so passionately dedicated to.